

PEOPLE & THINGS

MORE changes are pending at the Central Office. I hear that Lord Woolton's retirement will be followed by the departure of Mr. Mark Chapman-Walker, Chief Publicity Officer. The two moves are unconnected. Before the election Mr. Chapman-Walker told the party leaders of his wish to retire.

The decision may seem premature for a young man of forty-one, but Chapman-Walker's reasons do him credit. He feels that, in such a creative job, new brains and new ideas are essential if a stereotyped, repetitive technique is to be avoided. He has, after all, directed the party's propaganda and publicity in three general elections; and each time more Tory M.P.s were elected. After nine years at Abbey House—three as Lord Woolton's P.A. and six as C.P.O.—he feels that the time has come to start a new career elsewhere.

In view of his record of service to the party Mr. Chapman-Walker could probably get the nomination for a safe Conservative seat if he wished, but because of his successful handling of the Conservative side of the first "Television Election," I am not surprised that some of his friends at the Central Office expect him to gravitate into commercial television.

"Dam Busters"

SOME German newspapers are criticising the making of the "Dam Busters" film on the grounds that it is the "glorification of a gruesome deed," that it was tactless to hold the premiere in the same month as Germany regained her sovereignty, and that anyway it had an inconsiderable effect on the German war effort.

On the latter point it is certainly true that the Moehne dam was rebuilt within five months of the R.A.F. raid, but, to achieve this, 2,000 slave labourers were used and Herr Hans Koenig, who is today back in his peacetime job as director of the Ruhr Dam Co., was given priorities even above supplies to the Russian Front.

The power station at the base of the dam was swept away and was only rebuilt in 1953 and, today, as one drives through the beautiful Moehne Valley, one can see pumping still going on to clear a small artificial lake caused by the floods.

The Eder dam, near Kassel, was repaired at the same breakneck speed, but it was not refilled to full capacity until after the war.

It all depends on what is meant by "an inconsiderable effect."

Elegantiarum

THE raising of the embargo on the importation of libraries and works of art from America is doing much to put London back in its old place as the world's foremost art market.

One happy result of this will be the return to England of Mr. John Carter, the distinguished bibliophile who has been acting as personal assistant to the British Ambassador in Washington. From November onwards Mr. Carter will represent Messrs. Sotheby's interests in the U.S.A. and will be based, for most of the year, in London.

The Thin Man of English bibliography is exacting in all things, and it may be that his return will lead to a new stylishness in sale-room department. Those who grab at the shelves will stand rebuked by his famous pronouncement that "a man's handling of a book is as

By ATTICUS

revealing to the experienced eye as his grasp on the reins of a horse."

Le Mans (concluded)

JUST one more word on Le Mans. John Bentley, who as Motoring Correspondent of "Sports Illustrated" is by a long way the best American writer on fast motoring, and, since American manufacturers do not race at Le Mans, is presumably unbiased, has this to say:

"The lofty purpose of earlier Le Mans races was to provide a valuable testing ground for strictly production sports cars, so that the European auto industry might pass on to the average owner the benefit of valuable technical lessons learned under far more strenuous



The doomed Mercedes 300 SLR with Levegh at the wheel. The aerodynamic brake behind the cockpit is half-raised.

conditions than could ever be created on the test bench. The machines that were raced could be bought by anyone; their performance at Le Mans gave a potential owner an honest idea of what he could expect. . . .

"But then things changed. The F.I.A. (International Automobile Federation) relaxed its rules to allow models of which only 50 had been built, or of which the manufacturer could show honest intent to produce that number. Finally, the so-called 'prototypes' got into the act, and with their coming the true spirit of Le Mans vanished. Today the entries of virtually all leading auto builders, masquerading under the term 'sports cars,' are camouflaged Grand Prix jobs. . . .

"Hence, among other things, the strange, bat-like air brakes of the Mercedes SLR ingeniously located behind the centres of gravity and pressure of the car. These flaps, when used on turns, tend to steady the machine and minimise tail slides, but on highways they would be useless. Ferrari, with its new 269 cu. in., 365-h.p. 'sports cars,' is in the same boat. The latest 180 cu. in., 270-h.p. type 300S Maseratis, built almost entirely of Grand Prix components, are equal offenders; so are the 275-h.p. . . . etc., etc."

Fleet Street Occasion

MY congratulations to all the newspapers that are celebrating their centenaries are not in the least tempered by the fact that the age of a newspaper matters not a bit to the majority of its readers. That they have survived all the vicissitudes of a hundred years and flourish today is a tribute at least to their resilience and their adaptability to changing times. What in fact we are commemorating is, of course, the repeal of the Stamp Act, which gave the British people cheap newspapers at the time when the spread of education made them most necessary.

If I single out the "Daily Telegraph" for a special word, it is not because I have less respect

for "The Scotsman" and a round half-dozen of provincial papers, but because alone among the centenarians it has a mass circulation, measured by the mystic million—and thoroughly deserves it.

Spy Facts—

DURING the past five years, according to statistics in the Russian Press, 474 spies have been captured in Russian satellite countries. The Czech counter-espionage have caught 189, the Bulgarians 124, the Rumanians 97, the Poles 30 and Hungary 5. These do not add up to 474, and nor do the nationalities of the spies, which are given as: American 183, French 33, Yugoslav 22, British 20 and the Vatican 18.

But, however faulty the statistics, it seems reasonable to infer that spies are getting more efficient, for the annual captures are rapidly declining, thus: 1951, 110 spies; 1952, 7; 1953, 93; 1954, 61; and to date in 1955, only 18.

—and Phantasies

BUT this extract from the Czech newspaper, "Cesta Miru," under the heading "Spies get their just reward," knocks much of the residual stuffing out of the whole survey:

"Five members of the former Boy Scout organisation were sentenced to terms of from six months to four years by a Liberec court today on charges that although the registration of members for the Scout movement was no longer allowed, they continued to be active and to exert a harmful influence on young people. They could not reconcile themselves to the idea that the Scout movement built up by the British general Baden-Powell, which is still providing England with cadres for the intelligence service, has no longer a place in this country."

The Good Citizen

THE managing director of a London company tells me that, when it was decided that his firm would close during the summer months on Saturdays, he thoughtfully told his secretary to tell the local post office of the change so that the postmen need not call with the company's parcels on Saturdays.

The post office riposted smartly with a request for a fee of five shillings "in respect of service applied for."

When asked what would have happened had the company not bothered to notify their Saturday closing, the post office representative replied that the postmen would have called as usual on Saturdays, and, receiving no reply, would have taken the parcels back and returned with them on Monday. With no extra fee, of course.

Lullaby

HOT-HEADED clamour for the "Limited Warfare" against the Chinese mainland has inspired these verses in the American liberal weekly "The Reporter":

Don'tcha worry, honey chile,
Don'tcha cry no more,
It's jest a li'l ole atom bomb
In a li'l ole lim'ted war.

It's jest a bitzy warhead, chile,
On a li'l ole tactical shell,
And all it'll do is blow us-all
To a li'l ole lim'ted hell.